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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY **SECURITY INFORMATION**

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COUNTRY USSR (Mari ASSR)

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SUBJECT Construction of Minesweepers at Zelenodolsk

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1. From 1946 until source was discharged, four gunboats annually were completely finished in the yard and equipped with engines, guns, navigation installations, electrical equipment, radio plant and interior furnishings.
2. The gunboats were 40 m long, 6 m high and nearly 7 m broad. The free-board was about 2 meters.
3. A gunboat was powered by one large diesel engine, 3x7x4 meters. Such an engine could barely be stowed on a railroad car.
4. The gunboat had two screw propellers of about a man's height.
5. It has 10-mm armor all the way around. In addition to the engine room, the interior includes crew quarters, two ammunition rooms and fuel tanks.
6. There is a conning tower, a wheel house, one low funnel, a radio antenna and a searchlight.
7. A gunboat mounts three 80-mm guns, two side by side on the forecastle (twin guns ?) and one aft. The guns have protection shields. Their bases are sunk. Ammunition hoists are near the guns.
8. The crew complement is not known.
9. The vessels were painted grey. They showed only a red number with the Soviet star. Source believes that the last vessel he saw had the number "340".
10. The speed of the gunboats was estimated by the P-5 at 30 to 35 knots.
11. The construction of the gunboats is described as follows:
 - a. The building starts with the keel, the various parts of which are first welded together according to molds prepared on the mold loft and

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fitted into their correct positions by the use of a light crane and a traveling pulley. The transverse frames are then welded on 60-cm frame spacing. The frames are made of profile iron and bent on molds in the yard prior to this operation.

b. The transverse frames are then connected by strong iron girders across the ship so as to prevent them from being displaced. These iron girders rest on strong iron pillars. The iron floor forming the deck is fixed on them.

c. Another floor is built in at a distance of about 2 meters from this deck floor, and prior to its being fitted in; the second floor is of steel, but has only short faces. The heavy things (bases of the ship's guns, engines, etc.) are mounted on it.

d. Iron ribs are then welded on between the keel and the two sides of the ship, running parallel with the keel and the ship's side. Five iron girders of this kind are fitted on each side; they serve both for stiffening the ship and fastening the steel plates.

e. At the same time the steel transverse partition walls forming bulkheads (watertight) are welded on. As far as source can remember, there were five bulkheads in the forward section of the ship and five in the after section.

f. The outside of the ship is covered with steel plates, which are also welded together. During this fitting operation, the plates are held in position by the only crane available in the yard. The plates serve the double purpose of providing splinterproof protection and watertight plating.

g. All parts are electrically welded. There are less than 100 rivets throughout the ship. The idea is to attain a considerable saving in weight and material. Another alleged result is better maneuvering capability.

12. These operations were started in the late fall and had to be finished before the inundation period began. The high waters were used to float the vessels.

13. The gunboats are then taken to the fitting-out basin, where they are fitted out during the summer. There is no work on the slip in summer.

14. Zelenodolsk is the headquarters of the commander of the Volga flotilla.

15. Near the shipyard in Zelenodolsk is a naval base, to which the gunboats described are attached.

16. The finished gunboats are taken from the yard by the Soviet Navy. According to available information, they go to the Black Sea.

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Comment:

a. It is assumed that these vessels are mine sweepers of the 1301 type. This conjecture is also supported by the designation "340," which source appears to remember fairly well. This type seems to be built in large numbers; the Dubna shipyard also builds these vessels, which are later sent to Leningrad.

b. Considering the rather primitive working methods of the shipyard, the statement that only four boats were built annually seems quite credible.

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